

## Without A Doubt

Text: John 20; 24-29

In the world today and in our nation we make use of the word doubt quite often. In merchandising we say, "This product, whether it be a car appliance or anything else, is without a doubt the best on the market." In jury trials, the jury is often instructed that if they have a reasonable doubt as to the guilt of an individual, then it is their duty to acquit him. People often use the phrase, "I'm from Missouri, you'll have to show me," when they are sceptical about something. Well the man in our Scripture this morning could very well have uttered this phrase, because he was certainly very sceptical. And don't we often refer to a person sometimes as a, "Doubting Thomas?" In this respect we show what our feelings are toward a doubter.

Thomas may have been a doubter, or a pessimist as we would call him, but he was also a loyal disciple. He loved Jesus and it is thought that the reason why he was not with the other disciples, was due to the fact that he did not want anyone to see how grief stricken he was over the death of Jesus, so he went into seclusion. And since he loved Jesus so much he made the statement that he would not believe it was Jesus unless he actually saw the nail prints and touched them and saw the wound in Jesus side. And when he was convinced that it really was Jesus he made the complete acceptance of his Saviour by stating, "My Lord and my God."

The later life of Thomas is not really known. But there is a book that is supposedly the history of Thomas. It is called, "The Acts of Thomas." It is only a legendary story, but it certainly is true to character as far as Thomas is concerned. ~~After the death of Jesus~~ The story goes like this, "After the death of Jesus, the disciples divided the world up among them. That is they each took a certain section of the known world to preach in and to spread the Gospel. India fell to Thomas by lot. There is some truth here since the Thomist Church South India can trace its origin to Thomas. At first Thomas refused to go. He used the excuse that he was not strong enough for the journey. He said, "I am an Hebrew man; how can I go among the Indians and preach the truth?" But Jesus appeared to him at night and said, "Fear not Thomas, go thou into India and preach

the word there, for my grace is with thee." But Thomas very stubbornly refused. He said to Jesus, "Whither thou wouldst send me, send me, but elsewhere for unto the Indians I will not go."

Now it just so happened that a certain merchant came from India to Jerusalem. He was named Abbanes. He had been sent by King Gundaphorus to find a skilled carpenter and to bring him back to India. And it just so happened that Thomas was a carpenter by trade. While Abbanes was in the market place, Jesus came up to him and said, "Wouldest thou buy a carpenter?" Abbanes replied, "Yes." Then Jesus said, "I have a slave that is a carpenter, and I desire to sell him," at this He pointed to Thomas in the distance. So they agreed on a price and Thomas was sold. The agreement they had between them read, "I, Jesus, the son of Joseph the carpenter, acknowledge that I have sold my slave Thomas by name unto thee Abbanes, a merchant of Gundaphorus, king of the Indians." After the deed was drawn up Jesus found Thomas and took him to Abbanes. Abbanes asked Thomas, "Is this your master?" And Thomas replied, "Indeed he is." Abbanes told him, "I have bought thee from him." Thomas said nothing. But in the morning he rose early and prayed. After his prayer he said to Jesus, "I will go whither thou wilt Lord Jesus; thy will be done."

The story then goes on to tell how Gundaphorus commanded Thomas to build a palace and Thomas told him that he was able to do so. The king gave Thomas all the money that he needed to buy the materials and hire the workmen. But Thomas gave it all away to the poor. He would keep telling the king that the palace was rising steadily. But the king grew suspicious. Finally he sent for Thomas. And he asked, "Hast thou built me the palace." And Thomas answered, "Yes." When then shall we go and see it," asked the king? Thomas replied, "Thou canst not see it now, but when thou departest this life, then thou shalt see it." At first the king was very angry and Thomas was in danger of his life. But finally the king was won over to Christianity and this is how Thomas brought Christianity to India.

There are two things that stand out in the life of Thomas. The first thing is the fact that he absolutely refused to say that he believed, when indeed he did not. In this respect he was absolutely honest. Thomas had to be sure.



Thomas was not the kind of man who would blindly tell of his faith and not believe in it. Tennyson wrote, "There lives more faith in honest doubt, Believe me, than in half the creeds."

There is a story told of a Baptist minister who was strolling along the sea walk during a convention of his members in Charleston. He happened to meet an old colored man fishing. For a long time he watched the man sit very patiently waiting for a bite. Finally he got a bite and hooked the fish and pulled him in. It was an odd looking fish and the minister asked what kind it was. The man replied that it was called a Baptist fish. "A Baptist fish the minister asked," rather sceptically. "Sure," said the man, "They call them that because they spoil so fast after they are taken out of the water." Now this is true of all denominations. <sup>EASTER EX. FULL CHURCHES</sup> Many people come into them, but they have no ~~idea~~ <sup>IN</sup> idea ~~in~~ what ~~believe~~. <sup>EX. OF HIM</sup> it is they believe. Oh, they have a vague notion about Jesus, but that's about where it ends. It is so easy to stand before the rest of the congregation, and say a few, "I do's" and then you are a Christian. It's almost as easy as getting married. I think that in many respects the churches that require a period of classes for prospective members have a good idea. I think that because we have made Christianity so easily obtained, we are reaping it with the empty churches and a long list of people on the rolls who should be there. <sup>BUT AREN'T</sup> Religion is not taken as seriously as it should be. We should have a certain amount of Thomas's doubt. This questioning should involve all facets of our religion from the meaning of the Apostles Creed to the structure of the Bible. It is so easy to repeat the Creed and never really know what it means. And it is so easy to say, "Well, I accept the Bible as the inspired word of God." And let it go at that. But what we should do is to try to find out just what it is that the Creed means. And we should dig into the Bible to see who wrote it and how it was written and the <sup>8 WHAT IT SAYS TO ME IN MY LIFE</sup> circumstances under which it was written. <sup>ANOTHER ABOUT</sup> This would help not only to make more dedicated Christians, but people who were well versed in their religion and who could take it seriously enough to be a real active Christian.

The second point of Thomas, was the fact that once he made up his mind, or when he was sure, he went all the way. He answered Jesus, "My Lord and

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
BUTLER, PENNSYLVANIA  
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER April 21, 1974  
REV. RALPH C. LINK, PASTOR  
MRS. VELMA COLLINS, ORGANIST  
MR. RALPH COOPER, CHOIR DIRECTOR  
BILL WATFSON. STEVE BASEMORE - ACOLYTES

## ORDER OF WORSHIP 11:00 A.M.

SILENT PRAYER  
\*PROCESSIONAL HYMN No. 80 "GUIDE ME, O THOU GREAT JEHOVAH"  
\*SCRIPTION - CHORAL AMEN  
\*EXHORTATION

\*KYRIE (CHOIR, CONGREGATION AND PASTOR)

\*ASSURANCE OF PARDON - CHORAL AMEN

\*PRAISE

\*PASTOR: O LORD OPEN OUR LIPS

\*PEOPLE: AND OUR MOUTH SHALL SHOW FORTH THY PRAISE.

\*DOXOLOGY No. 551

SCRIPTURE LESSON: JOHN 20: 19-29

HYMN No. 239 "ASK YE WHAT GREAT THING I KNOW"

\*AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH (STATEMENT OF FAITH)

\*GLOBIA PATR

\*CALL TO PRAYER

\*PASTOR: THE LORD BE WITH YOU.

\*PEOPLE: AND WITH THY SPIRIT.

\*PASTOR: LET US PRAY.

\*PRAYER AND PRAYER RESPONSE

OFFERING

OFFERTORY "SPRING FLOWERS"

DUTE: "FRIOUS LORD, TAKE MY HAND" DORSEY DUTCH & HOWDY  
BOLAM

SERMON: "WITHOUT A DOUBT!"

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

\*HYMN OF DEDICATION No. 243 "MAKE ME A CAPTIVE, LORD"

\*BENEDICTION AND THREE FOLD AMEN

ORGAN POSTLUDE: "ALLEGRO" HEYSER

-----\*CONGREGATION STANDING-----

THE LOVELY FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR HAVE BEEN PLACED BY MR. & MRS. GEORGE PFLUGH IN MEMORY OF THEIR DAUGHTER PAMELA.

SERVING AS USHERS TODAY ARE: \*DON KINGSLEY, DARYL

TAIT, JOHN DREHER, GARY PENAR.

MR. & MRS. RALPH KILLEAN WILL REPRESENT COUNCIL AT THE DOOR TODAY.

NURSERY IS PROVIDED TODAY BY MRS. PEG COVERT AND PAULA STEPHENSON.

LAST SUNDAY WE HAD A TOTAL OF 381.

HOSPITALIZED: GEORGE EICHHORN - ALLEGHENY GEN. HOSP. 1027

TUESDAY - 7:30 - BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION. - *CHAVEZ*  
TUESDAY AND THURSDAY EVENINGS - WORK NIGHT AT THE *WED.*  
APARTMENT 110 WALKER AVE. THERE IS A LOT OF PAINT-

ING TO BE DONE - WE NEED YOUR HELP - MEN AND WOMEN.  
SATURDAY - 8-9 - YOUTH SWIM PARTY - YMCA. REFRESH-

MENTS WILL BE AT THE DON KENNEDY RESIDENCE. THE YOUTH CAN BE PICKED UP AT APPROXIMATELY 10:30.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER WILL BE OBSERVED - APRIL 30 -  
TUESDAY IN OUR CHURCH.

MR. & MRS. HERMAN CUSTEAD WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE MEMBERS FOR CARDS, PRAYERS, VISITS, AND FOR REV. LINK'S VISITS AND PRAYERS. THEY WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP FOR COOKIES AND JELLY BEANS. ---FROM THE CUSTEAD WITH LOVE---

A LIFE THAT IS FULL IS A LIFE THAT IS CHANGED.  
THOSE WHO DO NOT ACCEPT THE RISEN CHRIST LEAD LIVES  
THAT ARE EMPTY. THEY LACK THE POWER OF GOD'S SPIRIT,  
THE JOY OF HIS PRESENCE.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, THEREFORE, IS NOT A  
MERE HISTORICAL RECORD. IT IS THE VERY DYNAMIC OF GOD,  
THE POWER THAT TRANSFORMS OUR LIFE, THAT MAKES IT CONFORM  
MORE CLOSELY TO HIS. EASTER MEANS THAT WE NOW HAVE  
LIFE IN ALL ITS FULLNESS. AID ASSOC.

Sunday, April 5, 1970

Mr. Ralph Link, Lay Minister

Prelude

Lighting the Candles of Worship

\*Hymn No. 80

\*Invocation and Choral Introit

\*Prayer of Confession - Our Heavenly Father, who by Your love made me, and through Your love have kept me, and in Your love would make me perfect, I humbly confess that I have not loved You with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and that I have not loved my neighbor as Christ loved me. Your life is within my soul but my selfishness has hindered You. I have not lived by faith. I have resisted Your spirit. I have neglected Your inspirations. Forgive what I have been; help me to amend what I am; and in Your Spirit direct what I should be; that You may come into the full glory of Your creation, in me and in all men, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

\*The Kyrie

\*The Assurance of Pardon

\*The Gloria Patri

Responsive Reading Sel. 34, Page 584

Hymn No. 239

The Scripture Lesson - John 20:19-29

Pastoral Prayer and Choral Response

Offertory

\*Doxology and Dedication of Tithes and Offerings

The Anthem "Scatter Sunshine" The Junior Choir

The Sermon "Without a Doubt"

\*Hymn No. 176

\*Benediction and Choral Response

\*Postlude

\*Indicates that we stand

Greeters

Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Beck

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

This afternoon at 2:00 - Consistory Meeting

Wednesday evening at 6:30 - Junior Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday evening at 7:15 - Senior Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday evening at 8:00 - Double G Class Meeting

Thursday evening at 8:00 - Washington Township

Committee will meet in the home of Mrs. Wilmer

Leinell.

Friday, April 10 - The Vacation Bible School workshop will be held with two sessions at 1:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. All staff members and teachers are asked to contact Faye Cox about attending.

Sunday, April 12 - If present schedules are maintained, Rev. Kettering will be in our pulpit for his first sermon as minister at First Church.

Mrs. Curt (Bessie) Hill wishes to thank everyone for cards, flowers and prayers extended on her behalf. Bessie is recuperating at home. Gary Lukehart continues to make progress and is still a hospital patient. Dora DeVilling underwent surgery last Monday in Citizens Hospital and is recovering nicely. John Dowley, grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Dowley, was able to spend Easter at home after having been hospitalized.

The rosebuds on the altar announce the arrival of two baby girls, the one born to Mr. and Mrs. Preston (Linda Barker) Smith, and the other, Judith Lynn, born to S/Sgt. and Mrs. William Frampton.

The Double G Class will hold a cooking demonstration at the West Penn P.O. Building in Washington Township on April 21 at 7:30 p.m. Donations are fifty cents per person and tickets may be obtained from class members.



Just so happen Thos carp by trade  
While Abbanes in mkt place, Js came up said,  
"Wouldst thou buy a carpenter?"  
Abbanes say, "Yes."  
Js say; "I have slave that carp, I desire sell."  
At this he point Thos in distance.  
They agree price & Thos sold  
Agreement read; "I Js, son of Jos carp, acknowledge  
I have sold my slave Thos by name unto thee Abbanes  
a merchant of Gundaphorus, king of the Indians."  
After deed drawn up, Js take Thos to Abbanes  
Abbanes ask Thos, "Is this your master?"  
Thos reply, "Indeed he is."  
Abbanes tell him, "I have bot you from him."  
Thos no reply.  
But in morn he rise early, pray  
after prayer he say Js, "I will go whither thou  
wilt Lord Js; thy will be done."  
Story then go on tell How Gundaphorus command Thos  
bld palace & Thos told him he can do  
King gave Thos all money needed by materials, &  
hire workmen.  
But Thos give all away to poor  
He keep telling king, "Palace rising steadily."  
But king grow suspicious.  
finally sends Thos, asks, "Hast thou bilt me palac  
Thos answer, "Yes."  
When shall we go see, asks king?  
Thos answers; "Thou canst not see it now, but when  
thou departest this life, then thou shalt see it."  
King angry, Thos life endangered,  
but finally king won over xpianity, this how Thos  
brought xpianity to India.  
two things stand out life Thos  
1st, he actually refuse believe that which cannot  
see. Would not trust, in this respect absolutely  
honest.  
Thos not kind man blindly tell of faith & no belie  
Tennyson wrote; "There lives more faith in honest  
doubt, believe me, than in half the creeds."  
(Illustration Baptist Fish)  
This true all denom.  
Easter, Xmas good examp this  
full church, many come, & no idea what they belie  
Oh, have some vague notion Js,  
but ends there.

"Without A Doubt!"

Text: John 20:24-29

In world & nation make use word doubt often  
In merchandizing, whether car, washer, appliance  
( ) anything else, without doubt, best on market  
Jury told "if resonable doubt, then acquit"  
People show doubt in belief of all kinds  
Thomas in Scripture could very well say, "I doubt  
certainly very sceptical  
we call doubting Thomas,  
this respect we show feelings toward doubters  
Thomas may been doubter, or sceptic, but very loyal  
Loved Js, disc.  
reason thot not with other discs, grief stricken  
no want others see this  
since loved Js so much, made statement, would no  
believe until he saw for self  
When saw, made complete acceptance, "My Lord,  
and My God."  
Latter life Thos not really known.  
book supposedly life of Thos called, "Acts Of Thos  
Only legendary story,  
but true to character as far as Thos concerned  
Story like this:  
After death Js, discs divide up world among them  
Each took section known world preach spred Gospel  
India fell Thos by lot.  
Some truth here, cause Thomist church South India,  
ce origin Thos  
At 1st Thos refuse go, said,  
"I am an Hebrew man; how can I go among the indians  
and preach the truth?"  
Js appeared nite, said; "Thos, fear not, go thou int  
India & preach the word there for my grace is with  
thee."  
But Thos stubbornly refuse, said;  
"Master, whither thou sendest me I will go, send me  
but send me elsewhere, for unto the Indians I will  
not go."  
Just so happened certain merchant came from India  
o Jerusalem.  
His name Abbanes  
Was sent by King Gundaphorus find skilled carp  
bring back India

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife  
Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link  
Ethan and Aicha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)













Ralph C. Link  
153 Keck Road  
Sarver, Pa. 16055  
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.  
Married: December 15, 1951  
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill  
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.  
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.  
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

**SCHOOLING:**

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.  
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United  
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,  
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

**PASTORATES:**

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in  
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ  
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary  
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity  
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central  
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of  
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United  
Church of Christ



## PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

# STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.